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Strengthening South Asian Communities in America

DRUM
DESIS RISING UP AND MOVING

Megan Mack
Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
Department of Homeland Security

Dear Ms. Mack,

Our organizations write with extreme urgency and concern about Monday's confirmed deportation of ICE detainee Md. Tarek Ahmed (A# 202-156-150) back to Bangladesh.

Tarek was one of the 54 hunger strikers at the El Paso Processing Center from October 12th to October 20th. On the 9th day of the ElPaso54 hunger strike, ICE arranged for the Bangladeshi Consular Minister, Md. Shamsul Alam Chowdhury, to visit the facility to break their strike, and was given free access to the hunger strikers for over 10 hours which he spent interviewing, cajoling, intimidating, and pressuring them. After the visit, the Embassy published the attached press release and the pictures of the detainees, and posted it on their website. ICE's actions violated the confidentiality provisions protecting asylum seekers (See 8 C.F.R. §208.6), and further endangered their lives by exposing asylum seekers to representatives of the very same government from which they are seeking asylum. International and Bangladeshi press have published the hunger strikers' stories and their photos, causing a firestorm of inquiry and calls for their punishment in Bangladesh as the asylum seekers were viewed as "dishonoring" their country (see attached).

We filed a complaint to DHS-CRCL and received the attached response (CRCL Number 16-01-ICE-0012) dated November 17th, 2015.

How can DHS deport somebody who is a victim and a witness to DHS and ICE's violation of federal law while there are still investigations pending? How can DHS deport detainees back to their home countries to face imminent danger that has been created by its own actions?

There must be an immediate halt to the deportation of ALL detainees who were exposed to representatives of the Bangladeshi government at El Paso Processing Center on October 20th.

Please advise as to what steps are being taken to protect the lives and safety of the endangered ElPaso54 hunger strikers, and to preserve the integrity of any current or potential investigations into DHS' violation of federal law.

Sincerely,

Fahd Ahmed
Sridaran
Executive Director
DRUM

Lakshmi
Director of National Policy and Advocacy
SAALT